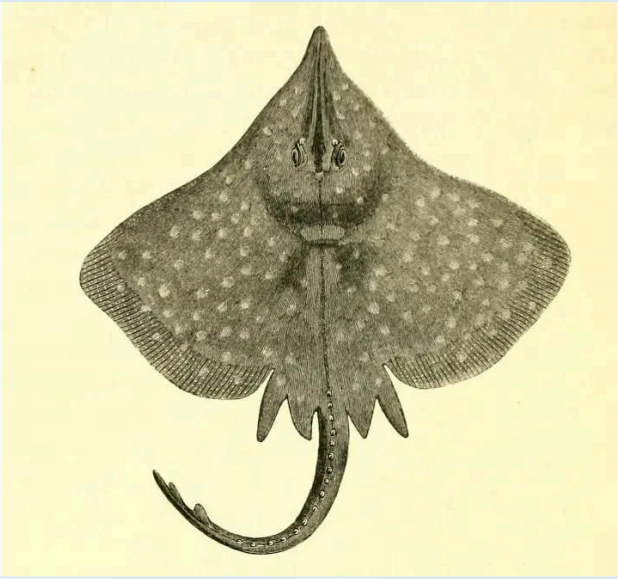
RAYS AND SKATES

Common skate

Dipturus batis (complex) Also known as blue skate, flapper skate, common skate (Raja batis)

Not recorded off Sussex in our sources | Confirmed record



Common skate (*Dipturus batis (complex)*). Picture: William Yarrell (1839 historic illustration of the flapper skate, not a photograph), Public domain (commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Licensing#Material_in_the_public_domain), via Wikimedia Commons: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Raja_intermedia_YARRELL_1839.jpg.

IN SHORT
The common skate is a very big skate. Our sources do not record it off the Sussex coast. British boat record: confirmed.

Key facts

IDENTIFY IT
Large diamond-shaped skate with a long pointed snout and long tail. Brown or greenish back with lighter spots; pale underside.

SIZE
Up to about 9 ft across and over 250 lb.

HABITAT
Deep water of several hundred metres, moving shallower in warm weather. UK populations now mostly in deep Scottish sea lochs and off west Ireland.

OFF SUSSEX
Not recorded in our sources

AROUND BRITAIN
No months in our sources

METHODS
Almost all boat fishing, with whole or flapper mackerel, bluey, large sandeels or herring on heavy tackle. Anglers now fish catch-and-release only.

GROUP
Rays and skates

COME FISHING WITH US

Fish with Kestrel Warrior from Brighton Marina

The common skate is not one of the fish our sources record off Sussex, so no Kestrel Warrior trip targets it. Come and fish the Sussex coast on one of our eight trips (Prices 2027):

- **Sightseeing tour** 1 hour, £20 pp
- **Squid and cuttlefish trip** 3 hours, £55 pp
- **Sea fishing trip at anchor, multiple species** 8 hours, £75 pp
- **Wreck fishing at anchor** 10 hours, £110 pp
- **Mackerel trip** 90 minutes, £27 pp
- **Sea fishing trip, multiple species** 4 hours, £55 pp
- **Flatfish drift trip** 8 hours, £90 pp
- **Shark fishing trip** 10 hours, £150 pp

Free tuition and free gutting and filleting of your catch. Rod hire £10 per person; fishing tackle is included on the shark trip.

Scan to book

Book: ring **07896 471691** (8am to 9pm, seven days a week) · info@kestrelwarrior6.co.uk · kestrelwarrior6.co.uk/contact/

About the common skate

The common skate is a very big skate. It is diamond-shaped, with a long pointed snout and a long tail. The back is brown or greenish with lighter spots, and the underside is pale. It can reach about 9 ft across and over 250 lb.

It lives in deep water of several hundred metres, and moves shallower in warm weather. Today the UK populations are mostly in deep Scottish sea lochs and off west Ireland, so it is not a realistic catch off Sussex.

The name covers a complex of closely related fish, also known as the blue skate or flapper skate. The IUCN lists the species as Critically Endangered. In most UK waters the blue skate and flapper skate complex is on the prohibited-species list, which means it must be returned unharmed, and anglers who fish for them now fish catch and release only.

It is a fish to read about and admire rather than one to plan a Sussex trip around. The British boat record stands at 227 lb, caught off Tobermory in 1986.

On the boat

This is almost all boat fishing, with whole or flapper mackerel, bluey, large sandeels or herring on heavy tackle. Anglers now fish catch and release only. The record gives no months for Britain or Sussex. Its habitat is deep water, with fish moving shallower in warm weather. It is not a realistic Sussex catch, and no Sussex grounds are noted.

British boat-caught record

Confirmed record

Weight	227 lb
Where	Off Tobermory, Inner Hebrides
When	1986
Angler	R Banks

Confirmed British boat-caught record: R Banks, 227 lb, off Tobermory, Inner Hebrides, 1986. The official list gives the year only and lists it as Skate (Common). The official weight-based boat records were frozen in June 2024, and newer boat claims must be measured (qualifying wingspan 250 cm, length also required). The Notable Fish List also has a released boat fish estimated at 229 lb, Rackwick, Orkney, 2012.

Care and rules

PROTECTED, RELEASE. The common skate is Critically Endangered (IUCN). The blue skate and flapper skate complex is on the UK prohibited-species list in most UK waters, and must be returned unharmed. Rules change: check the current rules before you fish.

Did you know?

The British Record Fish Committee's Notable Fish List includes a released boat-caught fish, estimated at 229 lb, from Rackwick, Orkney, in 2012. That is 2 lb above the 227 lb record from 1986.

Sources: British Sea Fishing: Common Skate; BRFC Sea Fish Records, June 2026; BRFC Notable Fish List, Nov 2025; Wikipedia: Flapper skate. The full guide, with links to every source: kestrelwarrior6.co.uk/sea-fish-guide/common-skate/